

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner's allowance of claims 11-14 and 16-20 as well as the provisional allowance of claims 4-6, 10, 15, 25 and 27 are appreciatively noted. These claims have all been placed in self-standing format and are thus now assumed to be in fully allowed status. In this regard, the Examiner's attention is drawn to the fact that allowed claim 18 actually was a dependent claim that inadvertently omitted to state its dependency from claim 1. This claim has now been rewritten in independent format including the limitations of claim 1 so that it is assumed to still be in fully allowed status.

In response to the rejection of method claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, this claim has been cancelled and incorporated into an amended claim 22 which is now self-standing in independent in format. In this process, the objectionable phrase "the nature of said response" has been avoided thus mooting the outstanding formal grounds of objection/rejection.

The rejection of claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly anticipated by McAtee '320 is also mooted by the above cancellation of claim 21 without prejudice.

The rejection of claims 1-3, 7-9, 22-24 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made "obvious" based on a combination of McAtee '320 in view of Wong is also respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-3 have been cancelled above without prejudice or disclaimer thus mooting this ground of rejection.

Claims 7-9 now depend from allowed claims thus mooting their rejection as well.

Claims 22, 23 and 24 are now all in independent format. Claim 22 includes a "contract" which, from the Examiner's comments, it is assumed is considered to be patentably distinct from the prior art. Claim 23 includes negotiation to establish conditions for provision of component processes. Once again, this is the "contract" aspect which the Examiner's comments appear to indicate as being patentably distinct. Claim 24 adds a feature wherein the conditions time out. It does not appear that the Examiner has even asserted any particular prior art teaching or suggestion with respect to this feature.

Dependent claim 26 depends from claim 23 and therefore should be allowable for at least reasons already noted above with respect to its parent claim 23.

The Examiner's attention is drawn to added method claims 28-49 corresponding respectively to apparatus claims 4-20 and 23-27. These claims are believed to be

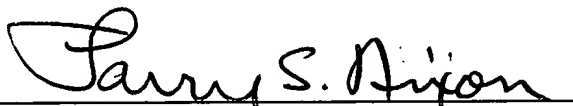
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allowable for reasons analogous to those making corresponding apparatus claims  
allowable.

Accordingly, this entire application is now believed to be in allowable condition  
and a formal Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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